

Governor Carney Announces Recipients of \$1 Million in Education Opportunity Grants



Funding will help districts and charter schools support disadvantaged students and English language learners

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Wednesday announced that nine Delaware school districts and charter schools will receive a combined \$1 million in Opportunity Grant funding to support programs that help disadvantaged students and English language learners succeed in classrooms across the state.

Delaware's [Opportunity Grant program](#) – created and funded by Governor Carney and members of the General Assembly in the Fiscal Year 2018 budget – will help districts and charter schools improve supports for low-income students, students chronically exposed to stress and trauma, and English language learners. District and charter awardees will use the grant to fund programs in the 2017-18 school year.

“All Delaware students deserve a quality education and an equal chance to succeed. We’re working hard to provide schools and educators with the tools they need to more effectively serve students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and close the achievement gap,” said **Governor Carney**. “I look forward to seeing the progress that these schools and districts make, and will urge them to share their successes with their fellow educators across the state. Thank you to members of the General Assembly for their leadership in helping fund this program.”

Governor Carney has pledged to take decisive action to address Delaware’s achievement gap, and he has made it a priority to support disadvantaged students in Wilmington and across the state. In July, the Governor established the Wilmington-based Office of Innovation and Improvement, led by longtime Wilmington educator Dorrell Green, to support students and educators in high-needs schools.

For Christina School District, Opportunity Grant funding will help increase resources at Elbert-Palmer Elementary School for students and families dealing with complex trauma. Christina is focused on treating trauma as part of a larger effort to reduce student suspensions, increase student attendance, elevate student achievement, and more.

“The Christina School District is excited to receive an Opportunity Grant for Elbert-Palmer Elementary School, which will allow us to implement strategies like compassionate schools training for teachers and related resources that are critical to student success,” said **Richard Gregg, Superintendent of Christina School District**. “With this funding, students at Elbert-Palmer will truly have increased opportunities—just as the name of the grant suggests. We are thankful to the Department of Education for recognizing how much our students deserve to have access to high-quality programs.”

"We are very excited about this opportunity to make Elbert-Palmer a Comprehensive Compassionate School," said **Dr. Gina Moody, principal at Elbert-Palmer Elementary School**. "Staff will be given resources to become more informed practitioners who engage with students with various social and emotional needs. Our plan will focus on providing stronger positive behavior supports for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, such as counseling services, and universal Tier 1 supports such as preferred activities and tangible incentives. Additionally, we will focus on engaging families in the educational process through community and school events."

Woodbridge School District plans to use its Opportunity Grant funding to contract with a behavioral health provider who will provide counseling services at Woodbridge Early Childhood Center and Phillis Wheatley Elementary School.

"The awarding of the Opportunity Grant to Woodbridge will give our staff and students new and innovative approaches to meeting the social and emotional needs of our students," said **Heath Chasanov, Superintendent of Woodbridge School District and the 2017-18 President of the Chief School Officers Association**. "We are extremely appreciative of this funding source being provided by the Governor's Office and the Department of Education to provide additional programs for our students to be successful."

"The Woodbridge School District is very grateful for the opportunities this grant provides," said **Michele Marinucci, Woodbridge School District's Director of Student Services**. "We will be implementing additional innovative programs in music, mindfulness, health, wellness, and emotional stability as we continue our journey of meeting the social emotional needs of all of our students."

Red Clay Consolidated School District plans to use the Opportunity Grant to enhance their trauma informed care so they can provide students who have greater needs with higher

levels of care.

“We are extremely excited to receive this grant to work with students, families and staff members to provide trauma informed support and professional development,” said **Dr. Mervin Daugherty, Superintendent of the Red Clay Consolidated School District**. “The opportunity to partner with the University of Delaware will also allow us to provide trauma screening and implement group/individual interventions for students impacted by trauma. We are hopeful this path forward will become a model for other schools throughout the district and the state.”

In considering applications for funding, the Department of Education gave preference to school-level initiatives, rather than broader district or organizational programs. Grant applicants outlined a detailed plan for how funds would be used – and grant recipients are required to provide information on the outcome of the support, in an effort to showcase what is working.

District and charter school awardees specifically focused on integrating student services and trauma-informed supports to low-income students, as well as on additional supports to low-income students and English language learners.

“We are thrilled to be able to facilitate educators’ efforts to better meet the diverse needs of students throughout the state, especially those students who need the most support,” said **Dr. Susan Bunting, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Education**. “This opportunity also gives Delaware another way to identify what works in schools and to share successes with educators servicing similar populations.”

2017 Opportunity Grant awardees:

Colonial School District – \$200,000 – Castle Hills Elementary, Harry O. Eisenberg Elementary, Pleasantville Elementary,

Wilmington Manor Elementary

This grant will support 1,970 students across four schools. The plan is for Colonial to implement trauma-informed supports and deepen the Responsive Classrooms approach through embedded training, coaching and other supports. A group of teacher-leaders will be developed. The plan is designed for this core group of teachers to turn the training around to the rest of the staff.

Christina School District – \$106,832 – *Elbert Palmer Elementary (EPE)*

EPE will support 250 students and their families through a comprehensive, Compassionate Care model. EPE intends to reduce student suspensions, increase student attendance, increase family involvement, increase student achievement, and provide more resources for families dealing with complex trauma.

Red Clay School District – \$106,832 – *Richardson Park Elementary*

Richardson Park will provide trauma informed care to all students by changing the school level climate. They will support staff in re-conceptualizing disruptive behavior to a trauma informed lens and provide access to higher level of trauma care for students in need. The project will: 1. Produce school staff who can identify, support, and refer all students exposed to trauma and who can integrate trauma informed care with existing programming. 2. Increase access to more intensive care of students of need and their families. 3. Strengthen Richardson Park's network of trauma referrals.

Brandywine School District – Mt. Pleasant – \$100,000 – *Mount Pleasant Elementary (MPE)*

The intended impact of this project will be to serve: 30-40 high need students and their families with ongoing, targeted supports; 200 families with services to meet their needs throughout the school year; and the entire adult and student population. They expect to see improvements in chronic

absenteeism, family engagement, climate and student achievement. MPE seeks to become a comprehensive services center, as well as implement mindfulness initiatives throughout the school.

Great Oaks Charter School – \$100,000

Great Oaks will support implementation of broad trauma based and social emotional programming to support 120 students with weekly individual and/or group counseling. All 446 students of the school's students will benefit from the implementation of a restorative discipline system designed to drive self-agency and positive decision making. Great Oaks serves grades 6-8.

Kuumba Academy Charter School – \$100,000

Kuumba will use the grant to fund a portion of its comprehensive trauma-informed practices and supports package. The package addresses school culture, academic needs, family engagement and service provision through a trauma-informed and culturally sensitive lens. Kuumba is committed to providing integrated student services and trauma-informed supports to low income students. The package will serve all of the school's 750 students in grades K-8.

Las Americas Aspira Charter School – \$100,000

LAAA will implement a reading framework supporting the needs of EL students, including embedded teacher supports. This reading framework will enhance the balanced literacy framework by embedding language acquisition scaffolds so that all students, English Learners included, improve their literacy achievement and ultimately close the reading achievement gap.

Woodbridge School District – \$97,678 – *Woodbridge Early Childhood Center, Phillis Wheatley Elementary School*

Woodbridge will provide parents with the necessary knowledge to make informed nutritional choices for their families, and further develop staff members on trauma informed practices in order to support student's academic and behavioral needs. One of the primary focus areas of the grant is to contract with a

behavioral health provider to provide counseling services in both schools.

Caesar Rodney School District – \$88,656 – *Caesar Rodney High School*

Caesar Rodney will provide trauma informed supports and integrated services for all 750 English learner (EL) students. The plan is designed to train non-ESL certified teachers using a train-the-trainer model to better meet the academic and language needs of the ELs. CRHS will utilize the expertise of the University of Delaware and WIDA resources (resources to assist in language acquisition for English learner students) to target planning, instruction and assessment.

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